854 is a special occasion when father lets the infant ride on his shoulders ("ashkokko alä", lit. rode like a marmoset monkey) while going to visit another hamlet. Men do not carry children on their [165] backs, woman's fashion. But parents, particularly fathers, do not take infants too seriously for an additional reason, that of infant mortality which is still high at this stage.

857 Socialization and enculturation begin through the peer-group of playmates, with whom infants have the most frequent, lengthy, and intensive contacts. They tease each other and scold each other into what they, in their playful, experimenting fashion, regard as "proper" behavior; and penalize, haze and discipline each other in the same way. From the adults they take both ideas and hand-me-down objects that have been used, worn-out and discarded, for their play activities, organize them experimentally into child-culture version of their own; for adults rarely produce a toy for children nor give them any new, unused object.

854 There is a cooperative side to this apparently random play
857 activity, leading to the beginning of useful economic activities.
861 Older children teach the younger ones, e.g., to make little whisk-brooms ("wof ger", lit. bird's foot) out of reeds, for which they are rewarded by their mothers with a thick, cake-like bread(similar to "dabye" of monks), which carries the same name, "wof ger". On certain church holidays, particularly "Buhe", younger children accompany older ones on their gift-begging tours.

857 Their powers of observation, active, free and relatively un-
867 structured prior to later discipline, imitate, in their play activities, the social relations, including the family and sexual-social relationships of their elders. When about five years old,

576 Very Polite: "shango watta" - (lit. he went to a meeting).

514 Extremely Polite: "rwaro sorā" - (lit. he left home).

192 Extremely Polite: "shershor watta" - (lit. he went for a walk).

522 Wit, used in court or by homespun philosophers to entertain their friends, compensates for the many formalities in this culture and society. The famous wit, Alāqa Gābre-Hanna has already been cited.

538 Proverbs, "tarāt" and riddles may be used to make a comment of esoteric meanings, understandable only to one's initiates. Proverbs fulfill a social function, beyond mere entertainment, for even philosophy, being utilized to begin any negotiation, such as for marriage. This is emphasized in proverbs on proverbs:

[539] "Like Halleluyah before the chanting (in church),
(begin with) a proverb before the discussion".
"(to drink) mead, (first get) a container,
to talk, (begin with) a proverb".

538 Proverbs and riddles used by parents, teachers and leaders of
593 society have a pedagogic function, and can be used to reprimand and
[86] instruct. Conflict between father and son, the complexities involved, and the possibility that contrary to the major cultural assumption of parental superiority, the son may sometimes have logic on his side, is indicated by the following:

[539] "(Says the father):

"Your Father you cannot accuse (e.g. in court, shaming yourself)
nor plow the sky,
nor roast water".

"(Replies the son):

"The father, by his own shame he will stand accused;
the sky, by lighting it is plowed;
water, in a pot it is steamed".

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Still another invidious distinction of considerable importance in the Amhara outlook is that between the "big man" (*ṭilliq saw*) and the commoner (*terā saw*). "Bigness" may be measured in terms of political power, economic wealth, ecclesiastical status, or any combination thereof. Though the peasant frequently has little affection for the big man, he customarily treats him with the greatest show of deference. No matter how unfamiliar a big man may be or from what part of the country he comes, the Amhara peasant sees him as entitled to unquestioning courtesy and obeisance. Analogous distinctions discriminate between the wealthy (*hābtām*) and the poor (*dehā*), and between the genteel (*čhawā*) and the rude (*bālagē*).

Yet if the Amhara takes a dim view of women, youth, and poor folk, as well as non-Amhara and non-Christians, he suffers from no illusions about homo sapiens at his best—unless they are dark illusions. The generic word for "man" in Amharic, *saw*, is the subject of a number of negative associations and idiomatic uses.[12] At its worst, the word is found in an idiom that signifies the evil eye (*ya-saw ayn*), literally: the "eye of man" (or, more idiomatically, "the eye of others"). At its best, when used to signify a fully formed human being, the word *saw* characteristically appears in the plaintive saying, *Saw yallam* ("there is no human being"); in other words, an individual who fully embodies the concept of humanity does not exist. In general, one may say that the Amhara's view of human nature is dominated by his perception of man's inherent aggressiveness and untrustworthiness.

The Amhara believes that unformed human nature is poor raw material, and that without strict punishment throughout childhood a person will grow up to be rude and offensive toward others. As an adult, moreover, he must constantly be kept in check. The rationale commonly given for the extensive schedule of fasting is that man's nature is wicked, and only by weakening himself in this manner will he be turned away from some act of aggression against others.

The Amharic concept of *ṭegābaññā* illustrates this view. *Ṭegābaññā* literally carries the meaning of one who has been sated with food and drink, but is normally taken to mean someone who begins to insult and pick fights with others. In their use of this and related words the Amhara express the belief that aggression is the usual consequence of being sated. Insubordinate behavior on the part of a servant or political appointee is usually explained as a result of his having been too well fed. "When a peasant gets sated he hits with his stick. . . " is the first line of a number of couplets I collected among rural Amhara. The specific effect of drinking alcoholic beverages is believed to release, not Eros, but the aggressive instincts. An Amharic proverb about *tallā* states this directly: "One [glass] whets the appetite; two quenches it; three heats one up; four makes one quarrel; five brings fighting; six causes killing." Contrary to the view that world peace depends chiefly on filling

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life.

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones.

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *zar* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels.

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shillalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor.

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bälagē* ("rude"), a trait which is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[3]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 18 Amhara society as marked by a moderately high degree of independence. This is to say that Amhara society gives relatively wide rein to individual impulse in action. It is not to say that Amhara culture places a high value on the moral worth of the individual personality. That is a separate question, which we shall now proceed to explore.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS CONFORMITY AND ANONYMITY

*121 181 156 The extent to which individual personality is valued in a society is reflected primarily in two aspects of its culture. One of these comprises its processes of education, in the broadest sense of the term; the other, its forms of art. The character of these aspects of culture reveal, respectively, the degree of concern for the *development* of an individualized self and the degree of concern for the *expression* of an individualized self.

Education and Socialization

*121 155 • 861 867 [854 Obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in bringing up children among the Amhara. After a prolonged and indulged infancy, the Amhara child from about three years on is subjected to a regime of discipline and repression. He is taught to fulfill without question any request made by any older person. He is conditioned to stand quietly whenever guests are present and to stand facing the wall while his parents or guests eat their dinner. If addressed by elders, especially those outside his immediate family, he is expected to reply in a barely audible whisper—a norm that is sometimes adhered to with such pathetic faithfulness that it has become the object of gentle satire in a short story by the young Ethiopian writer, Tadesse Liban.[26] Children who are noisy and disrespectful are referred to contemptuously by the term *bälagë*, meaning "rude."

*121 155 855 524 The desires and interests of an Amhara child are not taken into account by those who raise him. He is provided with a bare minimum of clothes, and little effort is expended in procuring him playthings,[27] although in some families little dolls made of rags (*ashängulit*) are produced. Children have

*121 155 857 a rich play-life with their peers, but this consists mostly in imitating various adult activities. Organized games occur very rarely, the chief one—*gannä*—being played as a rule but once a year, on Christmas Day.[28] The traditional songs and dances are learned from other children while tending the herds, but children are not encouraged to perform them in front of adults. The

*121 155 855 858 opinions of children are never expressed, let alone consulted. Indeed, in some commoners' families the children are treated little better than the farm animals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him